



The SHIELD

A quarterly bulletin from the Summit County Sheriff's Office

2024 Volume 2

Faith & Blue Returns for a 4th Year



HOOKS

TRIGGERS

- DOES NOT TRUST MEN

- ISSUE W/ ...

↳ MATH TEACHER

↳ MR. S...

- DOES NOT CARE

- HAS GUN

- NO KNOWN INJURIES

Poise Under Pressure:
Meet our Crisis
Negotiators

A new office
opens in
Northfield
Center!

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Summit County
Sheriff's Office (OH)

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Check out the new Sheriff's Office K-9 Cruiser!





From the desk of

Sheriff Kandy Fatheree

It's hard to believe that summer is already here! We here at the Sheriff's Office have been hard at work on some upcoming projects and events for the summer, and I'd like to tell you about one of them.

Very soon, we will be holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony to formally open a brand new facility in the City of Akron. This facility will house former inmates that have been recently released from our Jail who are suffering with mental health and addiction issues, and who are also homeless. Very often, it is these individuals that – whether for want of shelter, clothing, or other essentials, or facing a mental health crisis, or unable to break their drug or alcohol addiction – are the ones that quickly re-offend after release and land right back in our Jail again and again and again.

The first part of this plan is already in place, with the introduction of the THRIVE program at the Jail in 2022, in which inmates are paired with caseworkers to begin their recovery. Of the inmates involved in this program, only around 10% have had a new legal charge after release, and only 1% have experienced an overdose. These numbers are very promising!

This new facility will provide the other missing piece in the puzzle. Working in conjunction with the Summit County ADM Board, Community Support Services, Summit Psychological Associates, and others, this facility will help those with mental health and substance abuse disorders continue the treatment, medication, and therapy that they started in the Jail, while also helping them find permanent housing and reconnect with their families.

Breaking the cycle of repeated incarceration has numerous benefits for our community. Firstly, it is the humane thing to do, and will help to make a dent in the local homeless population. Secondly, it is a significant savings to taxpayers. Each time an individual is arrested, incarcerated, and goes through the judicial process, it costs our community tens of thousands of dollars! Lastly, it frees up space, resources, and manpower at the Jail for those violent inmates who truly belong there. Jails were not intended to be clinics, hospitals, or homeless shelters. We need to connect these individuals to the resources that will help turn their lives around and make them valuable members of society once more.

These programs have been pet projects of mine since I became Sheriff, and I am so pleased to see them coming to fruition.

Kandy Fatheree

Kandy Fatheree
Sheriff, Summit County, Ohio

In The News

sheriff.summitoh.net

Your Source for Summit County Sheriff's Office News

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Sheriff's Office cuts deputy shortage by more than half through innovative recruitment

With the swearing-in early June of 14 new deputies who completed the Summit County Sheriff's Office-University of Akron Police Academy, Sheriff Fatheree is excited to announce that the Sheriff's Office's recent shortage in deputies has now been cut by more than half.

Like most law enforcement agencies across the nation, the Summit County Sheriff's Office has faced a deficit in deputies in recent years, with retirements outpacing new hires. The biggest contributor has been the retirement of a large number of deputies that joined the office around thirty years ago.



Sheriff Fatheree swears in 14 new cadets at the Sheriff's Office Training Facility

“When I and many of my colleagues entered the force in the early and mid-1990s, we were part of an enormous hiring spree,” explained Sheriff Fatheree. “Fast forward three decades and that generation of deputies all hit retirement age at the same time.”

The deputy shortage peaked in 2022, with the Sheriff's Office down 59 deputies from the approved operating number. As of today, that number has been reduced to 28, with a full summer class of cadets already commenced, and another full class expected in the autumn.

Sheriff Fatheree attributes the turnaround to her team's think-outside-the-box approach to recruitment, and their increased involvement within the community.

“Every interaction we have with the public is an opportunity to talk about a career with the Sheriff's Office,” said Academy Commander Bill Holland. “We're constantly networking and engaging.”

In 2022, the Sheriff's Office pursued and obtained grant funding to develop new and innovative recruitment methods, with a particular focus on reaching more women and minorities. Fatheree's team produced recruitment videos and graphics and purchased ads that run on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and other platforms, and they made radio ads that ran for months on numerous local stations.

The Sheriff's Office also began to have a greater presence at job fairs and other events within the large immigrant communities of Akron. It's now commonplace to encounter men and women from these diverse ethnic groups in nearly every academy class, as they too pursue their dreams of working in law enforcement.

"There were many groups in our community that, for a long time, were overlooked when it comes to recruitment – those days are over," said the Sheriff.

An additional grant obtained by Fatheree's team allowed them to remove yet another barrier preventing some from entering the field of law enforcement: the cost of the academy.

"We found that many would-be cadets weren't pursuing their dreams of working in law enforcement because of the financial hurdles of attending the academy," said Academy Commander Bill Holland. "It's difficult to drop everything and put your life on hold for several months to attend a full-time academy, especially when you work a full-time job or have children."

For those cadets committed to joining the Summit County Sheriff's Office after completing the academy, the Office is now paying their full tuition and providing an hourly wage.

"It's an investment in their future, it's an investment in the future of our office, and it's an investment in the safety of our community," said Sheriff Fatheree. "It's a win-win no matter how you cut it."

The Sheriff's Office intends to maintain these recruitment efforts well into the future and will continue to develop new approaches and outreach methods. Sheriff Fatheree believes that the office will be back at full staffing within the next two years.

Those interested in pursuing a career at the Summit County Sheriff's Office can learn more at SummitSheriffJobs.com.



Academy Commander Bill Holland times cadets as they take their physical fitness tests

POISE UNDER PRESSURE

THE CRISIS NEGOTIATION UNIT

“Issues with school... Does not trust men.... In room with hostage,” hurriedly scribbles Deputy Josh Gruelle on a white board, listening intently to the conversation unfolding between Deputy Chris Klopfenstein and the armed suspect holed up inside the school. Deputy Brian Woods looks on, offering ideas of things to say to build a rapport with the girl.

She is furious after learning she has flunked a final math exam and will be held back a grade. She wanted to graduate with her friends and go off to college with them. She showed up at school that morning with a gun taken from her parents’ closet and began firing erratically. Nobody was hit, but the suspect is holding a classmate hostage.

Fortunately, the suspect is Sheriff’s Deputy Woodyard, and her hostage is Deputy Jordan. They, along with the deputies conducting negotiations, are taking part in a training scenario organized by the Commander of the Sheriff’s Office Crisis Negotiation Unit, Lieutenant Chris Rhoades Jr.



Unfortunately, reality all too often mimics the fiction of the scenario, as Rhoades knows well. He has been a member of the Negotiation Unit for eleven years and his father, retired Chief Chris Rhoades Sr., was one of the original negotiators that accompanied the SWAT Team after its formation in 1978.

Rhoades recalls how, while working as a patrol deputy in 2013, he responded to a callout for an armed individual threatening suicide with a shotgun. He was the first deputy to arrive on the scene and began talking with the suspect and earning his trust, ultimately convincing him to surrender. His success in this incident earned him an invitation from the Negotiators to join their team, and he quickly developed a passion for the art.

Fast-forward to the present day, and Rhoades now commands the eight-member Crisis Negotiation Unit. It’s a team consisting of deputies from a diverse pool of disciplines and backgrounds, who collectively bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the negotiation process. Unit members also work in Patrol, on the K-9 Unit, as DARE and School Resource Officers, and on the newly formed Gun Violence Reduction Unit, and one is a military veteran.

They also vary in age, with the youngest being 25 years old and the oldest at 53. Rhoades views this large age range as an enormous benefit. The older team members have the years of knowledge and experience under the belt, while those in their 20s and 30s bring technological savvy and insight to the team, and the ability to connect with younger subjects facing crises.

“Our younger team members will text with suspects on our throw phone and scour their social media for things to relate with them about, or signs of what may have triggered them,” said Rhoades.



The entire negotiation process is a carefully choreographed psychological dance, with each member of the Unit playing a particular role.

There's the Primary Negotiator who speaks directly with the suspect, the Coach who listens in and offers pointers and suggestions to the Primary, the Scribe who takes notes about the suspect's "triggers" and the "hooks" to help ground and calm them, and the Debriefers who interview witnesses, family members, and freed hostages.

In order to become the Primary, one must undergo 40 hours of FBI Negotiator training. Couple that with the entire Unit's quarterly training, joint training with the SWAT Team, and opportunities for advanced training throughout the year, and you end up with a highly fine-tuned operation.

Sheriff Fatheree was able to witness that operation in-person recently, as she accompanied the Crisis Negotiation Unit on a callout for a barricaded subject in Northfield Center. The man had a warrant for his arrest, and rather than surrendering, he hunkered down in his home with a gun. The Sheriff looked on as the team successfully talked the man out of his home and into the back of a Sheriff's Office patrol car.

“They did such an incredible job,” said the Sheriff. “It was textbook negotiation. Professional, calm, and smooth as silk. It's so impressive seeing them in action.”

The Negotiators utilize a repurposed ambulance that has been converted into a mobile command center complete with Wi-Fi, computers, cordless and corded throw phones, and other technology that allows them to communicate with their subjects.

They are almost always deployed in tandem with the Sheriff's Office SWAT Team, who they work closely alongside of.

When asked what some of the biggest changes are that he's seen in his decade-plus with the Unit, Rhoades first mentions the improvements made in technology and communications, then pivots to another factor: “We're being called out a lot more now, nearly every other week.”



In 2020, the year Rhoades became Unit Commander, the team responded to 14 callouts. Two years later they responded to double that number, and 2024 is on pace to match or exceed that.

Rhoades may be surprised by the increased demand for his Unit, but he is not worried, he knows his team is up for it.

“We're used to rolling with whatever is thrown at us.”

Welcome Bolt & Judge!

Our Two Newest K-9s



We're thrilled that our K-9 Unit is on its way to becoming the largest in Summit County, currently boasting a total of eight dogs, with our adopted rescue-in-training Dottie soon to make number nine. This is the most robust our K-9 Unit has been in over a decade!

K-9 Bolt is a 4-year-old German Shepherd-Belgian Malinois mix who is trained in explosives detection. He was purchased from Excel K-9 in Hiram, Ohio with donations from several local businesses. Bolt is paired with Deputy Jason Ruggles.

K-9 Judge came to us from the Stark County Sheriff's Office after his handler was promoted. The 5-year-old German Shepherd is trained in explosives-detection, tracking, and apprehension, and has won multiple gold, silver, and bronze medals in K-9 competitions. Judge is paired with Deputy Jared Monaco.



A VERY GRAND OPENING!

On June 5th, the Sheriff's Office, Macedonia Fire Dept., and Township Trustees officially opened the new Northfield Center Township Building with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house. Our relationship with Northfield Center goes back many decades, and we are proud to serve their wonderful community!





Summit County FAITH & BLUE

Summit County Sheriff Kandy Fatheree invites you to join us for a day of fun and fellowship at our 4th annual Summit Faith & Blue! The Faith & Blue initiative is the largest nationwide community-law enforcement collaboration in history, designed to bring law enforcement and the community together through the reach of faith-based organizations.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5th
11:00am - 2:00pm

Free Event!

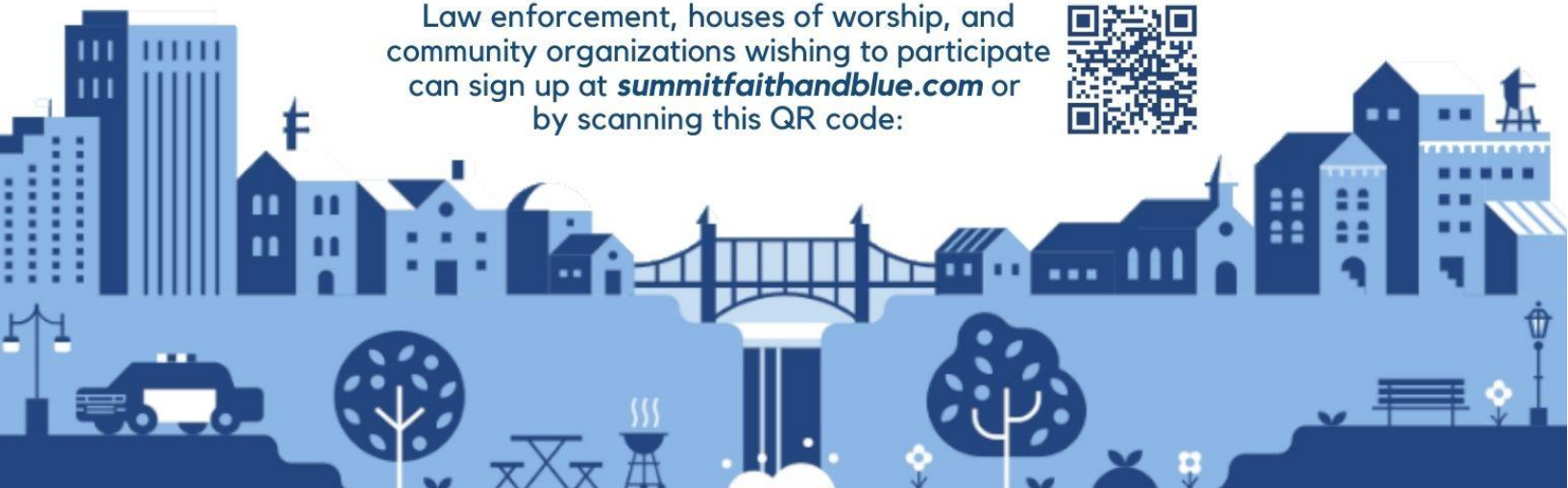
**All Are
Welcome!**

Hardesty Park

1615 W. Market St, Akron, OH 44313

**Live Performances Games & Contests "Walkie Talkie" Fun Run/Walk
Obstacle Course Food & Drink Touch-a-Truck Mounted Unit
Giveaways ...and more!**

Law enforcement, houses of worship, and community organizations wishing to participate can sign up at summitfaithandblue.com or by scanning this QR code:



What is Faith & Blue?

Faith & Blue is the largest nationwide community-law enforcement collaboration of its kind! The idea is a simple but powerful one: the ties that bind officers and residents must be reinforced if we are to build neighborhoods where everyone feels safe and included. Faith-based organizations are key to building these bonds because they are the largest and most diverse community resources in the nation.

Faith & Blue strives to build these connections through events jointly hosted by houses of worship and local law enforcement during Faith & Blue weekend every October. Houses of worship, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations are invited to come together for a day of fun and fellowship.

Sheriff Kandy Fatheree brought Faith & Blue to Summit County in 2021, and it has continued to grow and evolve each year. Summit Faith & Blue is held at Hardesty Park on W. Market Street in Akron. Fun, family-friendly events, games, raffles, performances, and demos are planned throughout the day, plus our IK “Walkie Talkie” fun run/walk.

Summit Faith & Blue is FREE and open to the public. You can learn more at SummitFaithandBlue.com!

The Summit County Sheriff's Office has organized a Fugitive Safe Surrender event to be held from August 7th to August 10th 9am-4pm at the House of the Lord Church in Akron. This will be the first Fugitive Safe Surrender in our county in over a decade!

Fugitive Safe Surrenders provide an opportunity for people who have any type of warrant to voluntarily surrender in exchange for the possibility of favorable consideration in resolving their case. Free legal representation will be available, and judges will be present on-site to hear cases.

Summit County FUGITIVE SAFE SURRENDER



**Wanted for a crime in Summit County
and ready to take responsibility?**

Take your first step towards a second chance...

SURRENDER YOURSELF SAFELY:

August 7th – 10th

9:00am – 5:00pm

The House of the Lord

1650 Diagonal Road, Akron, OH 44320

Fugitive Safe Surrender FAQ:



(330) 643-2114



Consult with an
on-site attorney



Speak with a judge
about your case



Receive favorable
consideration

Summit
Legal
Defenders



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